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REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT OF COMMON SCHOOLS FOR 1852.

In discharge of the duty imposed on me by law, I submit to the General Assembly the Seventh Annual Report of the Superintendent of Common Schools, embracing the operations of this department of the public service, and the condition of the common schools for the year ending May 1, 1852, together with some remarks on certain proposed alterations in the organization and administration of our school system.

During the year, nine Institutes or Conventions of Teachers have been held in different parts of the State, one more than was required by law, and for which no pecuniary aid was received from the State. The aggregate attendance of teachers at the nine Institutes, was about nine hundred. Each Institute was opened by a public lecture on the Monday evening of the week for which it was appointed, and continued in session until the close of the Friday evening following. The exercises during the day were devoted to the familiar exposition of the best modes of classifying, governing and teaching our common schools. At each Institute the evenings were devoted to lectures and discussions on topics connected with the improvement of common schools,

and other means of popular education in Connecticut, intended to interest parents, children, and the community generally, as well as teachers. To the Rev. T. D. P. Stone, Associate Principal, and Professor Camp, of the State Normal School, who cheerfully devoted five weeks of their vacation to these Institutes, I would make this public acknowledgment of my personal and official obligation for the great service rendered by them to the cause of education in the State. Without their gratuitous services, (for the compensation allowed was barely sufficient to meet their traveling expenses,) cheerfully rendered, these Institutes could not have been held, with the very small pecuniary provision made for them by the State.

An account of the proceedings of the several Institutes, with a catalogue of the teachers present, has been printed, and a copy of the same will be furnished to each member of the General Assembly. Before dismissing this subject, I beg leave to remark:

1. The value of this class of meetings, both to teachers and the communities where they are held, is universally acknowledged, and not an intimation has reached me from any quarter, that they should be abandoned.

2. My connection with Institutes every year for more than twelve years has satisfied me that to secure the continued interest and attendance of teachers in this class of meetings, the exercises must be instructive and varied; the persons conducting the exercises and delivering lectures, must have a reputation which will command in advance the confidence of the best teachers; the time and place for each Institute must be judiciously chosen, and the wants of the schools at particular periods of the year must be consulted.

3. The appropriation now made, viz., only eighteen dollars on the average, to secure assistance in instruction and lectures at each Institute, with an allowance for printing circulars, and the travel of the Superintendent, is altogether inadequate—thereby imposing a heavy pecuniary burden on the Superintendent, and subjecting public-spirited individuals, who have no private or professional interest in the improve-

ment of the schools, to great sacrifices of time for the common benefit of the State.

4. Interesting and profitable as these Institutes have already proved to teachers, the schools, and the community, they can be made still more interesting and profitable, and a larger attendance of teachers can be secured during each year, and more places can be reached and blessed by their influence, if the Superintendent can be left at liberty to appoint and hold as many of this class of meetings, at such times and at such periods of the year, as he shall deem best, without regard to county lines or particular months, provided he has reasonable assurance of the attendance of at least forty teachers, and provided the expense of each Institute shall not exceed one dollar for each teacher in attendance, or fifty dollars on an average to each Institute. The sum named is only one-fourth of the amount appropriated in several States for the same object, and is less than one-half of the amount allowed my predecessor in office.

EDUCATIONAL LECTURES.

In pursuance of a plan set forth in my Report for 1850, and of a resolution of the General Assembly in May of that year, I have continued to hold meetings of such persons as were disposed to come together on public notice, in different school societies, for familiar and practical addresses and discussions on topics connected with the organization and administration of the school system, and of the classification, instruction and discipline of public schools. With the coöperation of several gentlemen, all of them successful teachers, and most of them, experienced school officers, more than four hundred addresses have been delivered in different sections of the State. But for the failure of certain appointments from want of due notice, and in some instances, on account of meetings for other objects at the only time in which I could provide an address, at least one address would have been delivered, not only in every school society, but in every large neighborhood. The expense of this movement, by the resolution of the General Assembly, is limited to three dollars for each society visited,

a sum barely sufficient to meet the traveling expenses of the persons employed. For this trifling expenditure, an impulse of a most salutary and far reaching character has been given to the cause of school improvement, and the results are even now visible in the more enlightened and vigorous action of school districts, officers and teachers.

In pursuing this plan of operations, I have aimed to secure not only an address on topics connected with the condition and improvement of common schools, but to illustrate in a limited and imperfect manner, some of the advantages of a system of county inspection, and of a plan of reports which shall present the comparative standing of the schools in the several societies of the same county. With this end in view, the lecturers were requested to confer with school visitors and teachers, to visit at least two schools in each society in which an address was delivered, and after completing their circuit of lectures and visits, to present a report of their doings, and the results of their observations and inquiries. Extracts from these reports will be found in the Appendix.

In addition to the lectures given in connection with this plan of school visitation, and meetings, I am happy to state that many clergymen have addressed their people on the subject at appropriate seasons. It is difficult for me to see what day and place would be inappropriate for a clergyman to address parents on their duties as to the education of children, or the community as to the care and improvement of their schools. It is due to the clergy of Connecticut, to say, that as a class they have done, and are doing more for the improvement of common schools, than any other and all other portions of the community together, the parents of the children at school not excepted. But some of them can still find room for more vigorous efforts, and not weary themselves in well doing. Among the sermons which have been preached on this subject and published by the friends of education in the society, I would particularly invite your attention to that of the Rev. William H. Goodrich, of Bristol, a copy of which I have the pleasure of placing at the disposal of such members of the legislature as feel any special interest in the principal

subject discussed, viz., plea for increased means of education in Connecticut.

MEETINGS OF TEACHERS WITH THEIR SCHOOLS.

In connexion with the educational lectures, in several towns meetings of all the teachers with their schools and the parents of the children, under the auspices of the school visitors, have been held with the most gratifying results. At these school celebrations, the best methods of conducting the exercises, and studies of our district schools, have been illustrated, with classes of children, in contrast with the methods in too many instances pursued by teachers, who have not enjoyed opportunities of visiting the best schools, or of studying and practicing the art of teaching under the direction of a master workman in the profession. This class of meetings and exercises have been held mainly by that excellent teacher and practical lecturer, Mr. William S. Baker, who has devoted the entire winter to the improvement of the common schools, by lectures, familiar visits to schools, and personal interviews with teachers and parents.

EDUCATIONAL PUBLICATIONS.

In continuation of the series of essays commenced last year, in pursuance of a resolution of the General Assembly in 1850, I have collected the material and made some progress in the preparation of the following documents.

1. *The history and state of legislation of Connecticut respecting Common Schools, with a digest of the most important features in the school systems of other states and countries.*

In this document I have aimed to show in what particulars we have departed from the original policy and practice of the state; in what way we can make our existing provisions for education more efficient; and in what respects we may profit by the experience of other states and countries.

2. *An account of the Common Schools and other means of popular education, such as libraries, lectures, academies, &c., in every school society.*

This document will be highly creditable to the State in

many respects, and will enable every society and district to judge not only of its actual but of its relative condition as compared with other societies and districts. To give greater practical value to this account, I shall publish a brief history of the legislation of the several New England States, and institute a comparison as far as published official documents enable me to do, between the condition of our common schools, and those of the states referred to, in towns and districts having the same population and wealth.

3. *System of Common Schools for cities and large villages.*

In this document the principles on which public schools should be graded and conducted in populous communities will be discussed. In addition to my own plan and views of an efficient organization and administration, I shall give an outline of the system of public schools in actual operation in several of the large cities in different sections of the country, together with the course of instruction pursued in each grade of schools.

4. *School and Social Libraries.*

This document will contain a condensed statement of what has been done in this and other states to bring a library of good books within the reach of all classes of the community. To aid committees in the selection of books, a catalogue will be prepared, in which the titles will be arranged according to the subject treated of, and as far as practicable, with the price at which the same can be purchased. The document will also contain specimens of regulations to be adopted as to the manner of drawing and the preservation of the books, and hints as to the best mode of reading.

The substance of this pamphlet will be found in the document which will be transmitted with this report, entitled "School Library in East Berlin." This library is one of the fruits of an agitation of the whole subject of school improvement in a district numbering only seventy persons between the ages of four and sixteen, by a few individuals who were determined to have a good school in their own neighborhood, so that they could educate their children at home, instead of

sending them out of town, or even of the state, as they had been compelled to do before. An old, dilapidated structure, situated on a bleak site, has been succeeded by a large, commodious and attractive school-house, standing back from the highway, on a lot containing half an acre of ground, and adorned with fine forest trees. In this house a teacher competent to teach the higher branches of an English education, with heart in the work, and determined to spend and be spent in his the advancement of his school, and the educational improvement of the district, is employed through the year at a fair salary. This teacher has addressed the best argument which can be addressed to the people in favor of school improvement, viz., a good school, which can be seen and felt and appreciated, by parents and children. In addition to his day school, he has opened an evening school for the benefit of adults, and of youth who had left school before they thoroughly mastered some of the more advanced studies; and with a liberality which is not so common as to be passed by unnoticed, he has devoted the avails of the small tuition charged for this extra service, in aid of the purchase of a district library. His efforts have been seconded by the females of the district, and with their assistance, a fair was got up for the same object, which yielded the sum of one hundred dollars. To the sum thus raised, there has been added in subscription about one hundred dollars more; and to the well-directed labors of a few public-spirited men, and of this faithful teacher, Mr. Charles F. Dowd, is the district indebted for a good school-house, a good school, and a good library, through whose joint instrumentality every family will be blessed, and other districts will be prompted to the same liberal and enlightened efforts at educational improvement.

5. School Apparatus.

To aid committees and teachers in the selection of such apparatus and instrumentalities as are now regarded by the practical educators as indispensable in every elementary school, a list will be published, with the place and price at which each article can be procured, and in some instances,

directions for making the same, when this can be as well or more economically done, by teachers themselves. To aid teachers in the right use of apparatus, a few plain hints as to its practical application, will be published in connection with each article.

6. *Text-Books.*

In addition to a catalogue of the best school books, or at least of the books which have an established reputation among good teachers and educators, with the name and place of the publishers, and the price of each book, some remarks will be made as to the proper use of text-books in a course of common school instruction.

7. *Books on Education and the Theory and Practice of Teaching.*

This essay will contain a catalogue of a few of the best books on schools, school systems, education and teaching, which should be found in every school and social library, with an index to the most important topics connected with the organization, classification, instruction and discipline of schools, discussed in the books whose titles are published.

8. *Supervision of Schools.*

In this document the duties of the several officers created, or recognized in our laws in reference to the education of children and the management of the common schools, will be reviewed, with forms or suggestions for making the discharge of their duties more simple, effective and harmonious. I shall aim in particular, to show how the examination of candidates for teaching can be so conducted as to secure a common standard of qualifications in teachers of the same class of schools in different towns; how an uniformity of text-books in the schools of the same and adjoining societies can be introduced; and how the visitation of schools can be so conducted as to give vigor and life to the operations of the schools and the system.

9. Support of Schools.

An attempt will be made in this pamphlet to exhibit the amount of money necessary to carry out a system of common schools in the state, the manner in which the same shall be raised, the principles on which it should be distributed, and the check which must be applied to prevent its misapplication, and ascertain the result of its expenditure. Some tables will be annexed to show the sums now raised for the support of public instruction in different states and countries, and the modes of appropriating the same.

10. Parental and public interest.

The necessity of a general, intelligent, active and constant interest on the part of parents and the whole community in the school and the education of children, will be pointed out in this document, as well as the means and modes by which this interest can be created and maintained. As soon as parents begin to read, listen, think, talk and act on the subject of schools as they do about making money, or carrying an election, or propagating a creed, there will be less occasion of complaint of dilapidated school-houses, poor teachers and sleepy supervision; then the people will demand better, and will have them.

The preparation of the documents has not gone forward as rapidly, and the expense of publication has not been shared as largely by the friends of educational improvements, as I had hoped in the onset; but with or without aid, and as speedily as practicable, the series will be completed and published. In the mean time I have aimed to carry forward the regular business of the office; to examine all applications for remittance of forfeiture of school money, and give such relief as the equity of each case demands; to give such advice or assistance in matters relating to the creation and alteration of school districts; the manner of holding district meetings and the proceedings thereof; the building and repairing of school-houses, including the best mode of ventilating, warming, and seating the same; the finding of good teachers for districts which had failed to obtain such, and good places for teachers

who were out of employment; the reorganization of the schools in cities and large villages; the making of regulations respecting the management, studies, books, classification and discipline of the schools in a society; the quieting of local difficulties and misunderstandings which were growing up in districts out of the location or building of school-houses, or the employment, or continuation in school of an unsuitable teacher; the contemplated misapplication of public money to purposes not authorized in the law, and in fine, to these and all other matters, relating to the wide circle of powers and duties appertaining to school societies and districts, to school officers and teachers. The correspondence, and personal interviews, growing out of these and similar applications, and the time consumed in preparing for and attending Teachers' Institutes, meeting with teachers' associations, coöperating with the trustees and teachers of the Normal School, and addressing public meetings, leave me but little leisure for study and composition.

SCHOOL JOURNAL.

As a convenient mode of communicating with school officers, teachers, and friends of educational improvement in different sections of the state, and as an important auxiliary in the discharge of my official duties, I have assumed the responsibility of commencing the publication of a new series of the Connecticut Common School Journal.

As announced in the prospectus, the Journal will be the repository of all documents of a permanent value, relating to the history, condition and improvement of public schools, and other means of popular education in the state. It will contain the laws of the state, relating to schools, with such forms and explanations as may be necessary to secure uniformity and efficiency in their administration. It will contain suggestions and improved plans for repairs, construction and internal arrangement of school-houses. It will aim to form, encourage, and bring forward good teachers; and to enlist the active and intelligent coöperation of parents, with teachers and committees in the management and instruction of

schools. It will give notice of all local and general meetings of associations relating to public schools, and publish any communications respecting their proceedings. It will give information of what is doing in other states and countries, with regard to popular education, and in every way help keep alive a spirit of efficient and prudent action in behalf of the physical, intellectual and moral improvement of the rising and all future generations in the state.

The numbers thus far published of the current volume do not contain the usual variety of such a periodical, being devoted almost exclusively to a discourse on the life and character of the Rev. Thomas H. Gallaudet, and to documents illustrative of his services to the cause of deaf-mute instruction, and to the American Asylum for the education of deaf and dumb persons at Hartford. Feeling that the best lights of my own mind have been drawn and fed from his wise counsels, and the best purposes of my own heart have been strengthened by the beauty of his daily life, I could not neglect this opportunity of placing before school officers and teachers this memorial of a wise educator, and an everyday Christian gentleman. The name of Gallaudet will ever constitute a portion of the moral treasure of Connecticut. The numbers of the *Journal* devoted to this tribute to his memory will be presented to such members of the Assembly as will apply to this office.

In addition to the publication of a monthly periodical, devoted exclusively to the promotion of educational improvement, no pains has been spared to interest the conductors of our newspaper press generally to introduce into their columns, reports and discussions on the condition and improvement of our common schools, and other institutions and means of popular education. In no one year has so much educational matter been spread through these channels before the people of the state. For the uniform courtesy, with which all applications, on my part for giving publicity to notices for Institutes and lectures, have been met, I wish to make this public acknowledgment. Without the cordial

and general coöperation of the press of the state, the process of school improvement will be slow indeed.

STATE NORMAL SCHOOL.

The State Normal School has continued during the past year under the immediate instruction and management of the Rev. T. D. P. Stone, the associate principal, and Prof. D. N. Camp,—my duties as superintendent having precluded my taking any part in the direct management of the school. Under the labors and instruction of these experienced teachers, the institution is demonstrating its own usefulness in the great work of training up teachers for our common schools, and in disseminating improved methods of classification, instruction and discipline throughout the state. During the two years the school has been in operation, three hundred and twenty-four teachers have been in attendance for one or more sessions. In addition to their labors in the Normal School, its instructors have conducted or assisted in the instruction of twenty-two Institutes in the state, in which they met on an average at least eight hundred different teachers each year; have lectured thirty times before associations of teachers, in their state, county, or town associations, and have delivered over one hundred evening lectures on the condition of our schools. They have given their whole time and strength to the advancement of the common schools of the state. If the cause fails, it will not be from the want of zeal, or personal and pecuniary sacrifices on their part. It gives me great pleasure to make this acknowledgment of their cordial and effective coöperation with me in my own field of labor.

The report of the trustees will exhibit the present condition of the school more in detail.

LEGISLATION OF 1851.

I would respectfully call your attention to the practical operation of certain provisions in laws passed at the May session of the General Assembly of 1851. By an act entitled "An Act in addition to 'an Act concerning Education,'"

it is provided "that no future meeting of any school society or school district shall be deemed to be legally warned unless, in addition to the notice now required to be given of the time, place and object of such meeting, the person or persons giving such notice shall, on the day of giving such notice, leave a duplicate of the same with the clerk of such society or district, which it shall be the duty of such clerk to preserve on file."

Whatever may be thought of the policy of adding another and novel feature to the conditions on which the legality of a school meeting shall depend, and of embarrassing still more the action of a class of officers, most of whom do not hold the office long enough to become trained to the performance of duties of this nature, and who have no facilities for preserving files of papers, in addition to the book of records;—there can be no injury done in legalizing the proceedings of school meetings which have been held since the passage of the above act, the duplicate notice of which meetings were not left with the clerk, or by him preserved on file. Of the three thousand district and society meetings, annual and special, which have been held since the 2d of July last, the day on which the legislature adjourned, I have reason to believe that more than two-thirds failed to comply with the requirements of the foregoing act. At these meetings, officers were appointed, contracts entered into, teachers employed, taxes imposed, &c., and it is easy to foresee that extensive mischief must inevitably result from this wholly unintentional omission, through ignorance of the law, on the part of the officers warning the meeting, unless the legislature interposes its conservative power in the way above suggested.

By section 47 of the "Act for the assessment and collection of taxes," passed at the last session of the General Assembly, it is provided that "the assessment list of each town as the same shall annually be made and corrected by the assessors and board of relief, according to the provisions of this act, shall be the list on which all county, town, society, school district and highway taxes shall be laid." By section 41, the board of relief must deduct the amount of any indebtedness

from the list of any person resident in any town in this State, under certain conditions therein set forth. By section 51, "all acts and parts of acts inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed." The question has arisen how far the provisions of section 66 and 67 and 68 of the Act relating to Common Schools, by which "all the real estate" situated within a school district or school society, is made liable for the building of school-houses, &c., are affected by the provision in the section above cited. Can all or any portion of the real estate of a school district be exempted from taxation for building or repairing a school-house in that district, on the ground that the owner is indebted, and that such indebtedness, under the conditions set forth in the statute of 1851, must be deducted from the list of such owner. As there is a manifest conflict of the two laws, and if such indebtedness is to be deducted from the tax list of a school district, it will reverse the long settled policy of the state in the matter of building school-houses, and will invite and open the door to fraud in encumbering real estate, by temporary mortgages for the purpose of avoiding school taxes; will impose on a portion of the real estate of a district, a burden which the whole should share, and in the benefits of which (indirectly, through schools) every one participates, and will embarrass the making out of the tax list of a school district, your special attention is respectfully called to the subject. In several school districts, where school-houses have been built, all proceedings as to laying or collecting a tax have been staid in anticipation of some declaratory action of the General Assembly.

CONDITION OF THE COMMON SCHOOLS.

In anticipation of a statement more in detail, of the condition of the common schools, and other means of popular education in each school society, which I propose to submit as part of this Report, or as one of the series of Educational Tracts, I have prepared the following statistical and condensed view of the condition of the schools for the past year :

271

Number of towns,		148
“ incorporated cities,		6
“ incorporated boroughs,		11
“ school societies,		217
“ “ having limits co-extensive with the town,		31
“ “ composed of part of one town,		131
“ “ parts of two or more towns,		55
“ school districts,		1652
“ “ having 1,000 children between 4 and 16,		2
“ “ “ 500 and less than 1,000,		6
“ “ “ 400 “ 500,		6
“ “ “ 300 “ 400,		7
“ “ “ 200 “ 300,		14
“ “ “ 100 “ 200,		86
“ “ “ 90 “ 100,		39
“ “ “ 80 “ 90,		56
“ “ “ 70 “ 80,		75
“ “ “ 60 “ 70,		163
“ “ “ 50 “ 60,		179
“ “ “ 40 “ 50,		234
“ “ “ 30 “ 40,		325
“ “ “ 20 “ 30,		318
“ “ “ 10 “ 20,		175
“ “ “ less than 10,		30
Whole number of children between 4 and 16,		94,842
Population of State,		370,791
Valuation of “ October, 1851,—real estate,	\$111,556,471.00	
“ “ “ “ personal,	\$58,778,439.00	
“ “ “ “ aggregate,	\$170,334,910.00	
Amount of grand list,	\$5,802,953.18	
Capital of School Fund, September, 1851,	\$2,049,482.32	
Revenue of “	\$132,792.80	
Rate for each child,	\$1.40	
Amount of Town Deposit Fund,	\$763,661.83	
Annual income of do. appropriated for school purposes,	\$30,000.00	
Society and local school funds,	\$100,000.00	
Annual income of do.,	\$6,000.00	
Number of societies which lay a school tax,	3	
Amount of tax thus raised,	\$4,000.00	
Number of school districts which levy a tax on grand list,	17	
Amount thus raised,	\$10,000.00	
Amount raised by quarter bills for teachers' wages,	\$20,000.00	
“ “ “ for fuel,	\$10,000.00	
Number of districts in which winter schools were kept,	1,530	
“ “ “ schools were kept last summer,	1,410	
“ “ “ which kept a school 44 weeks,	50	

Number of districts which keep a school 40 weeks,	125
“ “ “ “ 32 “	800
“ “ “ “ 24 “	400
“ “ “ “ 16 “	265
“ “ “ less than 16	12
Number of scholars between 4 and 16 attending school—winter,	73,762
“ “ over 16	1,580
Average attendance,	52,170
Number of private schools of all grades—winter,	410
“ pupils in do.,	8,400
Cost of do. for tuition,	\$164,000.00
Whole number of teachers in winter—male,	1,000
“ “ female,	720
“ “ in summer—male,	650
“ “ female,	1,050
Number of districts employing more than one teacher,	115
Whole number of assistant teachers,	235
Number of teachers who boarded round—winter,	1,089
“ “ “ “ summer,	937
Average compensation in money, exclusive of board, per month,	
“ “ “ “ “ “ winter—males,	\$18.50
“ “ “ “ “ “ females,	\$8.20
“ “ “ “ “ “ summer—males,	\$22.00
“ “ “ “ “ “ females,	\$7.50
Number of teachers who taught the same school summer and winter,	
“ “ “ “ “ “ males,	110
“ “ “ “ “ “ females,	160
Number of teachers who have had at least ten years' experience,	220
“ “ “ “ five “	430
“ “ “ “ three “	500
“ “ “ less than one “	570
Number of schools broken up from incompetency of teacher,	60
Number of teachers whose certificates were annulled,	20
Number of scholars in other studies than those enumerated in the statute,	
viz., in Physiology,	600
Book-keeping,	300
Algebra,	750
Geometry,	60
Mental and Moral Philosophy,	120
English Composition,	3,000
Drawing,	2,000
Natural Philosophy,	575
Preparing for College,	20
Number of school-houses in a very good condition,	240
“ “ in a very poor condition,	460

Number of school-houses which ought to be abandoned,	420
“ “ with desks attached to three sides of the room,	930
“ “ furnished with a suitable blackboard,	250
“ “ “ with a blackboard of some kind,	1320
“ “ “ with globes,	260
“ “ “ with map of Connecticut,	290
“ “ “ with outline maps,	330
“ “ having two privies,	50
“ “ not having privy of any kind,	326
“ “ having wood-house or shelter for fuel,	370
“ “ with scraper, mat, &c.,	160
“ “ having suitable yard and play-ground,	200
“ “ standing partly or entirely in the street,	1,370
“ “ which have been built or thoroughly repaired within five years,	310
Number of districts which have voted within a year to build new houses,	40
“ “ in which the subject is agitated,	150
Number of societies in which a set of books is prescribed,	50
“ “ “ “ recommended,	70

PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS IN THE SCHOOL LAW.

The Joint Standing Committee on Education, of the last General Assembly, submitted a bill for an Act in addition to and in alteration of “An Act concerning Education,” which was continued to the present session, and ordered to be printed with the laws of 1851, that it might be brought to the notice of the people. To aid in this object, I caused an edition of the bill to be printed with a review of the action of the legislature for the last ten years, and circulated among school officers and friends of educational improvement. I have heard but one opinion expressed, and that in approval of all the main features of this bill, by those best acquainted with the present condition of our schools.

Section 1 provides for a union in one committee, of the powers and duties now distributed between two sets of officers. This simple provision will bring the entire supervision of the school affairs of a society under one committee, and the certificate of this committee as to the expenditure of public money, the employment of duly qualified teachers for at least the period of the year required by law, and the regular visitation of the schools, will be based hereafter on the

personal knowledge of the members, and not on the general declarations of district committees, or the more vague supposition that the schools have been kept according to law.

Sections 2, 3 and 4, provide for the gradual restoration of our school system, with the consent and action of all interested, as far and as fast only as such consent shall be given, and such action had, to its original territorial organization. In reference to the policy of our present organization, I beg leave to repeat the views substantially which I have before communicated to the public.

The whole area of the state is divided into one hundred and forty-five towns—two hundred and seventeen school societies, some of which are coëxtensive with the limits of the town whose name they bear, but more frequently embracing only portions of a town, and sometimes parts of two or more towns,—and sixteen hundred and fifty school districts, each containing portions of a school society. These several towns, societies, and districts, are corporations charged with portions of that responsibility which the laws of the state impose upon every parent and guardian of children, to see that every child is “properly educated and brought up to some honest and lawful calling or employment.”

The code of 1650—which in this respect only gave the form of legal requirement to what had already become the practice of parents in the several towns—provides that “for as much as the good education of children is of singular behoof and benefit to any commonwealth, the selectmen of every town shall have a vigilant eye over their brethren and neighbors, to see that none of them shall suffer so much barbarism in any of their families as not to teach by themselves or others, their children and apprentices so much learning as may enable them perfectly to read the English tongue and the capital laws of this colony, upon the penalty of twenty shillings therein.” To enable parents to give this education, and to the end “that learning may not be buried in the grave of our fathers in church and commonwealth,” it is made the duty of every town having fifty householders, to appoint a teacher whose wages shall be paid, either by the parents or

masters of the children, or by the inhabitants in general by the way of supply or general appropriation; and it is further made the duty of every town having one hundred families, to set up a "grammar school"—the masters of which must be able "to instruct youths for the university," under the penalty of five pounds for every year's neglect. In 1690, it being found that many families had allowed young "barbarians" to grow up in their midst, who could not "read the Holy Word of God, and the good laws of the colony," it was ordained by the General Court that "the grand-jurymen in each town do once in the year at least visit each family they suspect to neglect the education of their children and servants, and to return the names of such as they find neglectful to the county courts, there to be fined twenty shillings for each child or servant whose teaching is thus neglected." In 1702, the support of the common schools was made a regular charge upon each town, of forty shillings in every one thousand pounds in the county rates, which was levied and collected like any other tax; and in case any town did not keep up the school or schools, for at least six months in the year, the tax was collected and paid into the county treasury as a fine imposed upon such town for its neglect. If the amount raised in the county rate was not sufficient to maintain the school or schools for the period required by law, the deficiency was made up, one-half by the parents of the children, and the other half by an additional tax on the inhabitants of the town generally. In 1714, "the civil authority and selectmen" in every town are constituted "visitors," to inspect the schools at least once each quarter, to inquire into the qualifications of the teachers, and the proficiency of the scholars, and "to give such directions as they shall find needful to make the schools most serviceable to the increase of that knowledge, civility and religion, which they are designed to promote." These were the wise and far-reaching enactments of the fathers of our commonwealth, and remained the essential features of our school system until within the last half-century, and so far as the mode of support is concerned, until 1821, when by the most disastrous enactment ever placed

on our statute book, the legal obligation to raise either a state, town or society tax for the support of schools ceased, and permission was given to the districts to assess the entire expense over the receipts from its School Fund, on the parents of the scholars.

Under these wise and far-reaching enactments, the school habits of the people of Connecticut were formed, and in these *habits* the "peculiar" excellence of our school system has always resided. It is owing to the falling away of the people from these habits that our school laws, and our schools with more abundant means, and increased facilities of instruction, no longer accomplish the same results, which, according to the testimony of men well informed as to the condition of society at that time, were realized at the beginning of the present century. Then, in every town or society having more than seventy families, a school was taught for eleven months in the year, and in every society having less than seventy families, for at least six months in the year. These schools were the *main reliance of the whole community for the education of children* in the elementary studies. The rich and the poor, the laborer with his hands and the laborer with his head, sent their sons and their daughters to the same school. The property of the whole community was held responsible for the education of all its youth, and the care and support of the school were regarded among the civil and social as well as the parental duties. The grand result was seen in the universal diffusion of elementary education, and in the lively interest which was manifested in all that related to the prosperity and improvement of the school in the town, parish, and district meetings. The good education of children was felt to be of "singular behoof and benefit to the commonwealth"—and the growth of "idle, ignorant and stubborn youths" was prevented and extirpated as a "barbarism" not to be tolerated in a civilized and Christian land. It is the peculiar glory of Connecticut, and of her school system, that at the beginning of the present century, before her munificent school fund had yielded one dollar of revenue toward the support of the schools, her people had solved the

great problem of our age by educating every child born or residing within its limits, not only to read the holy word of God and the good laws of the state, but to meet the duties of home and neighborhood, and share in the administration of public affairs as a voter, and as eligible to any office.

Every departure from the original territorial organization of our school system, combined with the various changes which have been made in the mode of supporting the schools, has, in my opinion, weakened the efficiency of its administration, and proved a hindrance to the progressive improvement of the schools both in the quantity and quality of education given in them. These changes were gradually introduced to meet the wants of families, as they spread out beyond the first location of the church, and places of business; first, by the incorporation of ecclesiastical societies for the convenience of public worship; next, by the establishment of schools in such societies, and finally by the division and subdivision of these societies into school districts, with powers and officers distinct from those of the society to which they belong. These changes were consummated by the act of 1798, by which the inhabitants living within the limits of ecclesiastical societies were constituted school societies, which were clothed with all the powers and duties respecting schools, before appertaining to towns and parishes,—and by an act passed about the same time, empowering school districts to build school-houses, and receive and expend the dividends of the school fund and the avails of the school tax. School districts were subsequently authorized to assess the entire expense of the schools over the public money, upon the parents of the children who attend the school.

The law now recognizes the organization and authorities of towns in reference to a compulsory provision for the education and bringing up of “rude, stubborn and unruly” children, who are not properly cared for by their parents or guardians,—the supervision of the education and employment of children engaged in factories and manufacturing establishments,—the management of the “Town Deposit Fund,” one-half of the annual income of which is appropria-

ted to schools,—the payment of any abatement in a district tax or assessment for any school purpose, of any poor person who is unable to pay the same, in favor of the district in which such persons may reside, and the payment of the sum allowed by law to the acting school visitors of each society for performing the duties of visitation.

School societies are clothed with all the necessary powers to establish, support and regulate common schools of different grades for the useful education of all children in their respective limits,—including expressly the power to build school-houses, employ teachers, lay taxes, appoint certain committees with enumerated powers, and receive from the town and state all money which may be appropriated by law for the support of common schools. It is optional with each society to subdivide its territory into school districts, or to administer its schools in its corporate capacity, and without any such division. Every society, with a single exception of the City Society of Middletown, is divided into school districts.

School districts are clothed with all the powers granted to school societies for establishing and conducting schools, subject to certain conditions prescribed in the law, and to such general regulations as the society to which such districts belong, may prescribe. Each district is independent of all others, and practically acknowledges but a loose dependence on either the school society or the state. The schools in these districts, with the exception of those in Middletown, and the High School in Hartford, constitute the common schools of Connecticut.

Such is a brief outline of the present organization of our common schools. Its practical operation multiplies the number of corporate bodies and officers much beyond the demands or the convenience of the people. All that is now done by one hundred and forty-five towns, two hundred and seventeen societies, and sixteen hundred and fifty districts, requiring upward of two thousand district meetings, every year, could be better done at the regular or special meeting of the inhabitants of the several towns. All the financial

business of the schools could be promptly and economically done by the same officers who now manage the finances of the several towns—thereby dispensing with the appointment of at least three thousand officers for this purpose. The general supervision of all the schools, with all that relates to school-houses, the examination and employment of teachers, the regulation of studies, books, and classification of schools and scholars, could be done with far more thoroughness, system and uniformity by one committee for each town, so constituted as to have one member elected for each neighborhood or section where a school was located. The appointment of such a committee would dispense with at least four thousand persons who now accept their offices with reluctance and discharge their duties without previous preparation, and in a majority of instances in a very imperfect manner.

The school societies not being obliged or expected to transact any business except to appoint officers, and take care of the burying-grounds, (which is literally “the dead taking care of the dead,”) as no school-houses are to be built, or teachers employed, or taxes to be laid for any purpose, the annual meeting, which in most societies is the only meeting held in the year, is always thinly attended. During the past year, in several of the largest societies, which send, on an average, three hundred voters to a town meeting, not ten persons were present, and of these, a majority were school officers. In many instances which have come to my knowledge, there were just enough present to officer the meeting and bring forward the business. At these meetings the acting school visitors are required by law to present a report as to their own doings and the condition and improvement of the schools; but to what purpose? The report is not read, there are neither teachers, or parents, or district officers, present to profit by its exposure of evils, or suggestions of improvement. In only three instances was a document of this kind printed for circulation in the society, or among the districts, for whose benefit it was prepared. This want of knowledge as to the condition of the schools, this severance of the school

interest from all the other great interests of the town, combined with our mode of supporting the same, has led to that deep and wide-spread apathy which has been before referred to as the principal hindrance to educational improvement. The state of things would be far different if the entire management of the schools devolved on the towns, and questions affecting their improvement could come up for discussion at the regular town meeting. Then, at least, there would be an audience, and the advocates for better houses and better teachers would make themselves heard and felt. If appropriations were needed to increase the number or prolong the term of the schools, or furnish the poor children with books, there would be far less difficulty than now in obtaining a grant, by simply moving an addition to the regular town tax. Avarice, ignorance, indifference and aristocratic pretensions would, as now, be opposed to all liberal propositions, but these motives would be likely to be rebuked, exposed and overruled on a full hearing of the merits of the case.

The present distribution of powers and duties among school societies and districts respecting the presentation, examination and employment, supervision, dismissal and payment of teachers, leads to a complexity, and not unfrequently a conflict of jurisdiction, that defeats the great objects of the law, which, as I understand, are to bring good teachers and only good teachers, into the schools,—and to withhold the public money from all who, upon examination or trial, are not found to be such. In a majority of districts, the persons who employ teachers have not the leisure, practical knowledge and opportunity to select the best. They take the first candidate who applies,—in ninety-nine instances in one hundred, this candidate will become the teacher of the school, even though the school visitors do not approve of his qualifications. The supervisory power lodged in the visitors of the society, is rendered nugatory in consequence of the many independent and lateral agencies through which it must act, to reach the evil it would prevent or cure. Even the visitation of the schools is not performed at times and in ways to do much good, from the varying seasons of the year in which

schools open and close, and the want of proper notice and coöperation by the district committee.

From the process of dividing and subdividing the territory of a town first into societies, and then into districts, the most obvious and disastrous inequality in the education of children, in the same towns, has resulted. The districts differ from each other in territorial extent, the number, intelligence, wealth and educational interest of the inhabitants, the qualifications of teachers employed, the school-house and apparatus provided, and the supervision of the local committee. These elements and influences determine primarily the character of a school. If a child belongs to a populous district, or in a small one where the energy and liberality of a few individuals make up for its weakness in numbers and pecuniary means, he can enjoy the instruction of a well qualified teacher for at least ten months in the year, during his whole school life; and thus attain the highest advantages, provided by our law. But if he resides in a small district, he can attend a district school from four to five months in the year, kept annually in a small, dilapidated and inconvenient school-house, and taught by a cheap, and generally an incompetent teacher. There are at least five hundred districts in the state, and one or more in every school society, in which the children are doomed to an inferior and imperfect education, and which are so many "estates in expectancy,"—so many nurseries for ignorant and inexperienced teachers. This inequality can be partially remedied by a thorough revision of districts; and then by distributing one-half of the public money among them, according to the average attendance in each,—and the other half by some rule which will secure an equality of school privileges to all of the children of the same society or town.

But the most thorough and general improvement in all the schools of a society or town—the greatest equality of school privileges to all the children of the small as well as the large districts, can be effected by an abandonment of the district system and the establishment of schools of different grades, according to the age and attainments of the pupils, in different sections of the same society or town, under the

charge of a committee so constituted as to represent the wants of each section.

The bill under consideration does not provide for any modification of the organization of our system, so far as districts are concerned; except within the limits of incorporated cities, boroughs and villages, where the population is large and compact. And to these districts the same general principles apply as have been urged in reference to the union of societies, and bringing the schools directly before the people in their municipal organization. The consolidation of these districts, or their union, (and this provision extends to all districts,) for the purpose of maintaining a gradation of schools, is provided for in sections 8, 9, 10 and 12. One of the greatest hindrances to the thoroughness and extension of the course of instruction pursued in our common schools, as I have repeatedly urged on the attention of the legislature, and the people, in my official reports, and public addresses, is to be sought in the absence of all systematic classification of pupils, especially in our cities and large villages.

To enable children to derive the highest degree of benefit from their attendance at school, they should go through a regular course of training in a succession of classes and schools arranged according to similarity of age, standing, and attainments, under teachers possessing the qualifications best adapted to each grade of school. The practice has been almost universal in Connecticut, and in other states where the organization of the schools is based upon the division of the territory into school districts, to provide but one school for as many children of both sexes, and of all ages from four to sixteen years, as can be gathered in from certain territorial limits, into one apartment, under one teacher;—a female teacher in summer and a male teacher in winter. The disadvantages of this practice, both to pupils and teachers, are great and manifold.

There is a large amount of physical suffering and discomfort, as well as great hindrances in the proper arrangement of scholars and classes, caused by crowding the older and younger pupils into the same school-room, without seats and

furniture appropriate to either; and the greatest amount of suffering and discomfort falls upon the young, who are least able to bear it, and who, in consequence, acquire a distaste to study and the school-room.

The work of education going on in such schools, can not be appropriate and progressive. There can not be a regular course of discipline and instruction, adapted to the age and proficiency of pupils—a series of processes, each adapted to certain periods in the development of the mind and character, the first intended to be followed by a second, and the second by a third; the latter always depending on the earlier, and all intended to be conducted on the same general principles, and by methods varying with the work to be done, and the progress already made.

With the older and younger pupils in the same room, there can not be a system of discipline which shall be equally well adapted to both classes. If it secures the cheerful obedience and subordination of the older, it will press with unwise severity upon the younger pupils. If it be adapted to the physical wants, and peculiar temperaments of the young, it will endanger the good order and habits of study of the more advanced pupils, by the frequent change of posture and position, and other indulgences, which it permits and requires of the former.

With studies ranging from the alphabet and the simplest rudiments of knowledge, to the higher branches of an English education, a variety of methods of instruction and illustration are called for, which are seldom found together, or in an equal degree, in the same teacher, and which can never be pursued with equal success in the same school-room. The elementary principles of knowledge, to be intelligible and interesting to the young, must be presented by a large use of the oral and simultaneous methods. The higher branches, especially all mathematical subjects, require patient application and habits of abstraction, on the part of the older pupils, which can with difficulty, if at all, be attained by many pupils, amid a multiplicity of distracting exercises, movements and sounds. The recitations of this class of pupils, to be

profitable and satisfactory, must be conducted in a manner which requires time, discussion and explanation, and the undivided attention both of pupils and teachers.

From the number of class and individual recitations, to be attended to during each half-day, these exercises are brief, hurried, and of little practical value. They consist, for the most part, of senseless repetitions of the words of a book. Instead of being the time and place, where the real business of teaching is done, where the ploughshare of interrogation is driven down into the acquirements of each pupil, and his ability to comprehend clearly, is cultivated and tested; where the difficult principles of each lesson are developed and illustrated, and additional information imparted; and the mind of the teacher brought in direct contact with the mind of each pupil, to arouse, interest, and direct its opening powers—instead of all this and more, the brief period passed in recitation, consists, on the part of the teacher, of hearing each individual and class, in regular order and quick succession, repeat words from a book; and on the part of the pupils, of *saying their lessons*, as the operation is most significantly described by most teachers, when they summon the class to the stand. In the mean time the order of the school must be maintained, and the general business must go forward. Little children, without any authorized employment for their eyes and hands, and ever active curiosity, must be made to sit still, while every muscle is aching from suppressed activity; pens must be mended, copies set, arithmetical difficulties solved, excuses for tardiness or absence received, questions answered, whisperings allowed or suppressed, and more or less of extempore discipline administered. Were it not a most ruinous waste of precious time,—did it not involve the deadening, crushing, distorting, dwarfing of immortal faculties and noble sensibilities,—were it not an utter perversion of the noble objects for which schools are instituted, it would be difficult to conceive of a more diverting farce than an ordinary session of a large public school, whose chaotic and discordant elements have not been reduced to system by a proper classification. The teacher, at least the conscientious teacher,

thinks it any thing but a farce to him. Compelled to hurry from one study to another, requiring a knowledge of methods altogether distinct,—from one recitation to another, equally brief and unsatisfactory, one requiring a liveliness of manner, which he does not feel and can not assume, and the other closeness of attention and abstraction of thought, which he can not give amid the multiplicity and variety of cares,—from one case of discipline to another, pressing on him at the same time,—he goes through the same circuit, day after day, with a dizzy brain and aching heart, and brings his school to a close with a feeling, that with all his diligence and fidelity, he has accomplished but little good.

But great as are the evils of a want of proper classification of schools, arising from the causes already specified, these evils are aggravated by the almost universal practice of employing one teacher in summer, and another in winter, and different teachers each successive summer and winter. Whatever progress one teacher may make in bringing order out of the chaotic elements of a large district school, is arrested by the termination of his school term. His experience is not available to his successor, who does not come into the school until after an interval of weeks or months, and in the mean time the former teacher has left the town or state. The new teacher is a stranger to the children and their parents, is unacquainted with the system pursued by his predecessor, and has himself but little or no experience in the business: in consequence chaos comes back again, and the confusion is still worse confounded by the introduction of new books, for every teacher prefers to teach from the books in which he studied, or which he has been accustomed to teach, and many teachers can not teach profitably from any other. Weeks are thus passed, in which the school is going through the process of organization, and the pupils are becoming accustomed to the methods and requirements of a new teacher—some of them are put back, or made to retrace their studies in new books, while others are pushed forward into studies for which they are not prepared; and at the end of three or

four months, the school relapses into chaos. There is a constant change, but no progress.

This want of system and this succession of new teachers, go on from term to term, and year to year—a process which would involve any other interest in speedy and utter ruin, where there was not provision made for fresh material to be experimented upon, and counteracting influences at work to restore, or at least obviate the injury done. What other business of society could escape utter wreck, if conducted with such want of system,—with such constant disregard of the fundamental principle of the division of labor, and with a succession of new agents every three months, none of them trained to the details of the business, each new agent acting without any knowledge of the plan of his predecessor, or any well settled plan of his own! The public school is not an anomaly, an exception, among the great interests of society. Its success or failure depends on the existence or absence of certain conditions; and if complete failure does not follow the utter neglect of these conditions, it is because every term brings into the schools a fresh supply of children to be experimented upon, and sweeps away others beyond the reach of bad school instruction and discipline; and because the minds of some of these children are, for a portion of each day, left to the action of their own inherent forces, and the more kindly influences of nature, the family and society.

Among these conditions of success in the operation of a system of public schools, is such a classification of the scholars as shall bring a large number of similar age and attainments, at all times, and in every stage of their advancement, under teachers of the right qualifications, and shall enable these teachers to act upon numbers at once, for years in succession, and carry them all forward effectually together, in a regular course of instruction.

The great principle to be regarded in the classification, either of the schools of a town or district, or of scholars in the same school, is equality of attainments, which will generally include those of the same age. Those who have gone over substantially the same ground, or reached, or nearly

reached the same point of attainment in several studies, should be put together, and constitute, whenever their number will authorize it, one school. These again should be arranged in different classes, for it is seldom practicable, even if it were ever desirable, to have but one class in every study in the same grade of school. Even in very large districts, where the scholars are promoted from a school of a lower grade to one of a higher, after being found qualified in certain studies, it is seldom that any considerable number will have reached a common standard of scholarship in all their studies. The same pupil will have made very different progress, in different branches. He will stand higher in one and lower in another. By arranging scholars of the same general division in different classes, no pupil need be detained by companions who have made, or can make less progress, or be hurried over lessons and subjects in a superficial manner, to accommodate the more rapid advancement of others. Although equality of attainment should be regarded as the general principle, some regard should be paid to age, and other circumstances. A large boy of sixteen, from the deficiency of his early education, which may be his misfortune and not his fault, ought not to be put into a school or class of little children, although their attainments may be in advance of his. This step would mortify and discourage him. In such extreme cases, that arrangement will be best which will give the individual the greatest chance of improvement, with the least discomfort to himself, and hindrance to others. Great disparity of age in the same class, or the same school, is unfavorable to uniform and efficient discipline, and the adaptation of methods of teaching, and of motives to application and obedience. Some regard, too, should be had to the preferences of individuals, especially among the older pupils, and their probable destination in life. The mind comes into the requisition of study more readily, and works with higher results, when led onward by the heart; and the utility of any branch of study, its relations to future success in life, once clearly apprehended, becomes a powerful motive to effort.

It will not be necessary to pursue this subject further in this connection. The extent to which the gradation and classification of schools shall be carried, in any town, society or district, will depend, and the number of classes reduced in any school will depend on the compactness, numbers, or other circumstances of the population, and the number and age of the pupils, and the studies and methods of instruction in each school.

Section 5. provides for the assessment of a property tax in each school society for the support of common schools. There is a pressing necessity for additional resources in each school district and society to maintain such common schools as the right education of the children of the state requires.

Without the means, at once certain and sufficient to provide good school-houses, good books, good teachers, and good supervision, for a sufficient number of schools, there cannot be the highest degree of efficiency in any school law, however perfect in other respects. In my opinion, it is both just and expedient to provide liberally, but not exclusively, by state endowment, for the support of public instruction. As education is a want not felt by those who need it most, for themselves or their children,—as it is a duty which avarice and a short-sighted self-interest may disregard,—as it is a right which is inherent in every child, but which the child cannot enforce, and as it is an interest both public and individual, which cannot safely be neglected, it is unwise and unjust to leave it to the sense of parental duty, or the unequal and insufficient resources which individuals, and local authorities under the stimulus of ordinary motives, will provide. If it is thus left, there will be the educated few, and the uneducated many. This is the uniform testimony of all history. The leading object should be, for the state to stimulate and secure, but not supersede the proper efforts of parents and local authorities, and to see that the means thus provided are so applied as to make the advantages of education as equal as the varying circumstances of families and local communities will admit. If brought to the test of these principles, our present mode of supporting education will be

found deficient. The schools are every where placed on a short allowance, and the children of the state are subjected to the most gross inequalities of school privileges. As the means realized out of permanent public funds have increased, the means provided by parents, towns, societies and districts, have diminished in nearly the same proportion. At first, towns and societies were released from the legal obligation to raise money by tax for school purposes; and with this obligation the habit of doing so, which commenced with our existence as a people, almost immediately ceased. The practice of parental contribution toward the expenses of the school, for board of the teacher, fuel and other incidental expenses, which was at first rendered absolutely necessary in order to continue the school in certain towns eleven months, and in all, at least six months in the year, was gradually relaxed, until in a majority of the districts the school is kept open just long enough, under a teacher at the lowest rate of compensation at which a young person without experience and without intending to make teaching a business, can be employed, to use up the public money derived from the state or town. Even the custom of "boarding" the teacher,—a custom better honored in the breach than in the observance,—is complied with so grudgingly and reluctantly by many families, that teachers with any degree of self-respect, will not long continue to subject themselves to the annoyance of this mode of begging their bread. The result is, that taxation for common school purposes, except to build and repair school-houses, and that on the most penurious scale, is almost entirely abandoned by parents, districts and societies, and the right even is disputed and denied.

The provision under consideration restores one of the leading features of the original school system of Connecticut. In addition to the views which I have repeatedly presented of the necessity of the immediate practical recognition of this principle, your attention is invited to the following views.

"The doctrine should be understood and proclaimed in Connecticut, that the property of the whole community may rightfully be taxed, for the support of public education. It

should be proclaimed, because it is the true doctrine. The pecuniary interests of a community like our own, to say nothing of those interests that are higher, are deeply concerned in the question whether all shall be educated. They are as vitally concerned too, that all shall be *well* educated. The property of the rich, whether they have children or not, may and should be taxed, because the security of that property demands that this insurance should be effected upon it. The tax which they pay is only the premium on this insurance. Besides, it is cheaper as well as more grateful, to pay a tax for the support of schools, than it is to pay the same for jails and poor-houses.

“In Connecticut this right is denied and disputed. A tax may be levied on a district for the construction and repair of school-houses, but when a sum is to be raised additional to that which is received from the public funds, it is left to those who have children to send to the school. The consequences of this system are most mischievous. The summer school becomes a select school, instead of being a public school. Or perhaps to make it open to all, for a month or two, the allowance from the public treasury is eked out by the greatest possible extenuation. The cheapest teacher is hired, and the winter school is robbed of the means of subsistence, in order to furnish the thinnest possible allowance for its starving sister in the summer. When this ‘short allowance’ is consumed, the children of the laboring poor, at once the most numerous and the most needy, are retained at home, because the parents can or will not pay the *capitation* tax. The children of the rich are sent to the select school of a higher order, the one of their own providing; while the children of the middling classes occupy the district school-house, with the select school No. 2. Hence, in the summer, troops of children go no where to school, except to the school of nature, which to them is the school of ignorance and vice, and the schools which are kept up in multitudes of cases, are the merest skeletons of schools, both in numbers and in character. This bad and unequal system is sustained from two causes,—the opposition of so many tax-payers to a system

of property taxation,—and what is more unaccountable, the opposition of those who are *tax-voters* but not *tax-payers*, who are set against such a system, because it tends to build up schools for the rich! More than one instance can be named, in which this doctrine has been industriously circulated by some cunning miser among his poorer neighbors, and they have gone to the school meeting to vote against all expense, not dreaming that their advisers were trembling in their shoes, for fear of a petty rate bill. And so they have voted against any change, and saved their neighbor all expense, literally, and brought down the tax upon their own heads.

“This is unequal, anti-republican, and wrong; and it ought to be made odious. It should be held up in all its unfairness. The right of the town or school society to tax its property should be embraced by all parties. The party calling itself conservative should proclaim it, because it tends so certainly to the security of society. The party calling itself popular should hold it, because it sends one of the best of blessings to the door of every man.

“To this should be added, the condition attached to the distribution of the state fund, that no school society should receive its lawful portion, except on the condition, that it should raise by taxation, a specified sum for every scholar. This would be a hard doctrine in Connecticut, it is true, and that is the very reason why it should be insisted on. It is true and most important, and should be boldly uttered. The other states, without an exception, that distribute from school funds, do it on such a condition. The entire public sentiment of the Union, is fixed and unchangeable on this point, and we grieve to say that we fear the neglect of Connecticut has been a warning against following her example. Shall it be that this munificent bequest of our fathers, given to promote the cause of public education, shall fail of its design through the neglect or perversion of their sons? or shall it serve this cause, most effectually, as Connecticut shall stand forth as a perpetual monument to warn against the like use of such funds? Shall it be that the state which they

designed should be the model state of the Union, shall serve only as an example to admonish its sister states, rather than as one to excite and inspire them? Are we not bound as trustees of this fund, to secure the most complete fulfillment of their designs, and, as experience and a change of circumstances call for new safeguards, to provide these safeguards? May not the people make the raising of a specified sum on the property of the state, a condition against the improvident waste of this bounty?

"The argument on this subject is very simple, and as it would seem, very convincing. In order to improve our common schools, more money must be provided. If it is raised, as it now is by a tax upon those who use the schools, then the schools are no longer common schools, but for a part of the year, they must be select schools. The one must embarrass the other. Those who will have better schools will leave the public schools altogether. Those who depend on the common schools, cannot or will not elevate them. But introduce a property tax, and you make the schools the property and the pride of the whole people. You make it for the interest of the rich to use the money which they now expend for the support of higher establishments to raise and improve the public schools. Thus the blessings of this expenditure will be diffused. Its light and warmth will not be like that of the fire which cheers one apartment only, but like the heat of the blessed sun, which gives no less to the rich, for what it gives to the poor. To connect the raising of a small sum per scholar, as a condition of receiving the bounty of the state, is the simplest and surest way of elevating the schools of the whole state, together and alike."^{*}

"Doubtless it will be urged that a general tax on property, for this object would fall on many who have no children, and is therefore unjust. Carry out the principle of this objection, and it would overthrow the whole system of taxation. One would say that he never uses the public roads, and therefore he must not be taxed for them. Another never goes out in the evening, and therefore must not be taxed for lighting the streets. Another denies the right of all government and pre-

^{*} Prof. Porter's Prize Essay.

fers to be without any protection but that of virtue, he must not be taxed for courts and legislatures. But taxation, we apprehend, is never based on the principle that the individual wants it for his direct benefit, but that the public wants it; for the public has a right in all property as truly as the individual, and may draw upon it for its own uses. And one of these uses is the education of the youth; for there is a very important sense in which children belong to the state, as they do to the family organization. Indeed, if we revert to the Jewish, Persian, Lacedemonian and Roman states,—all those ancient fabrics that rose in the youth-time of nature,—we see the state to be naturally endowed with a real instinct of civil maternity, making it the first care of her founders and constitutions, to direct the education of the youth. And why should she not? These are her heroes of the future day, her pillars of state and justice, her voters on whose shoulders she rests her constitution, her productive hands, her sentinels of order, her reliance for the security of life, liberty and property. But if we are wrong in all this, it still remains to ask for the justice of our present method of taxation for this object. If it be hard on the holders of property who have no children, to tax them for the education of the poor, wherein is the justice of taxing those who have children, for twice their number? But there is no hardship in the tax on property of which we speak. It is only a good economical investment for its benefit. Every warehouse, vessel and free-hold of the city, is enriched by such a tax. Make no account here of the charges of pauperism that occur, where education is neglected, nor of those outbreaks of disorder that endanger the security and sometimes the very titles of property: consider only the respectability of your streets, the reputation of having good schools, the advantages accruing to every department of business from a character of general industry, honor and talent in the citizens, and the elevated state of society, produced by the same causes,—as a matter of loss and gain, how small a thing is the tax on property, necessary to make your schools free, compared with the value they will render back to property in so many ways? Nor let the poor man

scruple to say, that in giving children existence and a good family nurture, he has given enough to the rich man to justify a tax on his property, for the small amount necessary to educate these children; for property, again, depends on population, both for the increase and the maintenance of its value. Neither let the poor man feel, when the school bills of his children are abated at the public expense, that he is a receiver of charity; for he who has given to the state a talented, brave, or only worthy son, has given her more than the childless rich man would, if he were to give her all he has. Let him claim the education of his children, then, as a right. Or, if he has any feeling to be saved, claim it as a right that his children be not in the public schools as privileged for poverty's sake; but on a common footing with all. And it is matter of joy, that under our beautiful scheme of equal government, poverty can put in such claims, and speak aloud in its own right. We are willing to see as much agrarianism, coming in this shape, as the public vote can muster.*

Section 6 contemplates the application of a new principle to the distribution among the several districts, of all money appropriated by the state for the support of common schools. This principle recognizes the number of children in actual attendance,—the number who actually attend school,—not the number which should be there,—as the true basis of distribution. The alteration herein proposed has been recommended by several of the most experienced school officers in the country. The commissioner appointed to prepare a common school code for the state of New York, (Hon. S. S. Randall,) introduces this feature with the following remarks:

“It is proposed that the public money shall be distributed by the town superintendent among the several reporting school districts in proportion to the *number of pupils actually attending* the schools therein, and the average length of time they shall have so attended, to be ascertained by the teachers' authenticated lists. The existing system of apportionment, according to the number of persons residing in the

* Dr. Bushnell's Report on the Reorganization of the Com. Schools of Hartford.

district between the ages of four and twenty-one years, not only seems unwarranted by any sound principle of distribution, but operates with gross inequality and injustice in very many sections of the country. In city and village and manufacturing districts, its inevitable effect is to enhance the amount of public money beyond all proportion to the educational wants of the population, at the expense of the rural districts which absolutely need it. The funds contributed and authorized by the state should be equitably and fairly distributed, with a view solely to the benefit of those who actually participate in the privileges which they are designed to secure. Why should a district, where the greater portion of the children under the age of twenty-one years are engaged in manufacturing establishments, or in attendance at private and select schools, or not attending any, receive a share of this fund corresponding, not to the number actually availing themselves during any portion of the year of the benefits of the school, but to the whole number residing in the district, whether they have ever attended a day or not, while in a neighboring district where, perhaps, every child is kept at school for six or eight months of every year, its distributive share is barely sufficient to warrant the payment of a sum adequate to secure the services of the lowest class of teachers? By the adoption of the proposed principle of distribution, a direct and very powerful inducement is held out for the regular and punctual attendance at the district school of the greatest number of children, and for the longest possible terms. The advantages to be derived from this equitable arrangement, far outweigh, in the judgment of the undersigned, all the objections which have been urged against it from the comparative facilities for regular attendance afforded by cities and villages over those of the country districts. In point of fact it is believed the average attendance in the latter is much greater, in proportion to the population, than the former; but even if the fact were otherwise, the greater the number of children in attendance, and the longer the average term of such attendance, whether in the city or

country, the more liberal should be the allowance of the public money."

To obviate any injustice which the small districts might suffer, it is provided that every district shall receive a sum at least sufficient to keep a common school for the minimum length of time required by law. The operation of this rule in time, probably will be to diminish the number of very small districts.

Section 17 authorizes the superintendent of common schools to appoint one or more persons to visit school societies and districts in different sections of the state, for the purpose of inspecting schools, lecturing on the subject of education, giving and receiving information and suggestions on all matters relating to the condition and improvement of the common schools. In addition to these duties, the persons thus appointed are authorized to grant to those teachers, with whose examination and success in the practical duties of the school-room as observed by them in their visits to the school they are satisfied, a certificate of qualification which shall be good for two years.

The expense to the state of this new feature of school inspection in our system cannot exceed by this law three dollars to each society visited, or six hundred and thirty-one dollars, provided every society is reached. The state of Massachusetts appropriates annually twenty-five hundred dollars, in addition to the expense of the board of education, for the employment of two agents, "to labor among the people, arouse their attention, propose improvements in all the practical details of applying school money, of arranging districts, and of building houses, harmonize conflicting interests, converting private schools and academies either into public schools, or auxiliaries to them; attend public meetings, and conventions of teachers, advising with school committees, and visiting schools and aiding teachers, by their suggestions." Some of the objects here specified, and aimed at in the sections under consideration have been already realized in this state in a limited and imperfect manner, under the plan of lectures authorized by the resolution of 1850, commented on in my report for this and last year. The fol-

lowing suggestions were contained in my special report, accompanying the report of county inspectors of common schools, and are repeated as expressing my present views on the subject, and on the provisions of this section of the bill.

The want of an official authority,—the narrow sphere of action,—and the brief period of time which each county lecturer, with the compensation allowed, (which is barely sufficient to meet the expenses of travel,) will be able to give to the work, will, of course, make a broad difference in the result of this plan, from that of a system of county, or senatorial district inspection, which might easily be framed, and which should include the examination of all candidates for the office of teacher in a common school, of every grade,—the granting of certificates of qualification, graduated according to the attainments, experience, and practical knowledge of each candidate, and subject to be revoked by the authority granting the same, on evidence of inefficiency or unworthiness,—the personal visit at least twice a year to every school in the circuit, in which the examination shall be conducted both by the teacher and inspector, and by means of oral and written answers,—a personal knowledge of every teacher and every school,—a familiar conference for one day and evening, with all the teachers of a town, at least once during each season of schooling, and with all the teachers of a county, for one week, in each year,—at least one public address in each town, after due notice, in which the relative standing of the several towns in respect to school-houses, the attendance of children at school, the length of the time the several schools are taught during the year, the compensation paid to teachers, the degree of parental and public interest in the whole matter of education, and other particulars, shall be set forth and fortified by statements made by local committees, and extracts from the records of personal visits to the school,—a conference once a year with the several officers of the several towns and districts who may choose to come together, on due notice, for consultation respecting books, teachers, apparatus, &c.,—and an annual report to the State Superintendent, embracing their own doings, the con-

dition of the schools in each town, the relative standing of the several towns in all the essential points in the condition of public schools, and plans and suggestions for improving the organization, administration, instruction, and discipline of the schools. Until some such system of inspection can be put into operation, there will be no independent and competent tribunal for the examination of teachers; no responsibility to public opinion, pressing on local school committees and teachers; no persons constantly at hand sufficiently well informed and at leisure to devise and suggest plans of improvement, and coöperate in carrying out the same; no diffusion of new ideas; no benefiting by the experience of others; no rivalry for improvement; no progress.

Experience has shown, in every country, where a system of inspection, embracing the above features has been tried and which adds to the immediate supervision of a committee charged with the details of managing one or a small number of schools, the constant and regular visits of a person of known practical knowledge and skill in the business of education, and acting with an independence of local appointment and influence, although clothed with no other authority beyond that of giving friendly advice and coöperation, and of making public whatever of deficiency and of excellencies he may observe in his visits, that life and vigor are given to the administration of a school system. Children, teachers, committees, and parents, all share the impulse and the benefits of suggestions and hints thrown out in private conversation, and in the public addresses and reports which it is the duty of the inspector to make. No class of persons with us will be more anxious to receive the visits of an intelligent, devoted and impartial inspector, or to welcome his counsel and coöperation, than faithful teachers.

An essential feature of this plan of school inspection, is the examination and induction of teachers into the profession. Without going into detail, at this time, I would suggest for the consideration of school officers and teachers, some modification of our present system, in these respects.

The certificate or diploma of a school teacher should be

worth something to him, and be at the same time an evidence to parents and local committees who may not have the requisite time and qualifications to examine and judge for themselves of the fitness of a person to classify, teach and govern a school. It should, therefore, be granted by a committee, composed of one or more persons competent to judge, from having a practical and familiar knowledge of the subjects and points to which an examination should be directed, and above all, of what constitutes aptness to teach, and good methods of classification, instruction and discipline. The person or committee should be so appointed and occupy such a local position as to remove the granting, withholding or annulling of a certificate above all suspicion of partiality or all fears of personal consequences. A diploma should mark the grade of school which the holder, after due examination, is judged qualified to teach, and for this purpose, there should be a classification of diplomas. The first granted, and the only one which should be granted to a candidate who has not had at the time some experience as an assistant in the practical duties of teaching, should entitle the holder to teach in the particular school for which he has, or is about to apply, and which should be specified in the diploma. Before granting such a diploma, the circumstances of the school should be known to the person or board granting the same. After a successful trial for one term in this school, an indorsement on the back of the certificate to this effect, might give that certificate currency in all the districts of the town, where committees and parents could themselves know or judge of his attainments, character and skill as a teacher. A diploma of the second degree should not be granted until after a more rigorous and extended examination of the candidate has been held, and the evidence of at least one year of successful teaching can be adduced. This examination should cover all the studies pursued in common schools, of every grade, except in public high schools, in cities and large villages. This certificate should be good for any town in the county for which it is granted. After three years of successful teaching, teachers who have received the first and second certificates, may

apply for the third, which should be granted only by a board composed of the inspectors or examiners in two or more counties. This certificate, until annulled, should exempt the holder from all local and annual examinations, and be good for every school, so far as entitling the holder to be paid out of any public funds. Every certificate should be based on satisfactory evidence of good moral character, and unexceptionable conduct, and every teacher who proves himself unworthy of the profession by criminal or immoral acts, should have his certificate publicly annulled. The great object is to prevent incompetent persons from gaining admission into the profession, and exclude such as prove themselves unworthy of its honors and compensation. Every board of examination should be composed of working school men,—of persons who have been practical teachers, or shown their interest in the improvement of schools, and the advancement of the profession by their works. Every examination should be conducted both by oral and written questions and answers,—should be held only at regular periods, which should be designated in the law, and the examination papers, and record of the doings of every meeting should be properly kept and preserved. The names of the successful candidates for certificates of the second and third degree, should be published annually, in the Report of the State Superintendent, as well as the names of those teachers whose certificates have been annulled for criminal or immoral conduct. A portion of the public school money in each town should be paid directly to the teacher, according to the grade of certificate he may hold.

There are other sections in the bill under consideration, of scarcely less importance than those already commented on—such as that empowering any city to pass all necessary ordinances and by-laws with suitable fines and penalties, and to make all necessary provision and arrangement concerning children between the ages of five and fifteen, who are growing up in truancy, without the benefit of the education provided in our common schools, and without any regular and lawful occupation. My views of the necessity of some more provident and efficient measures to reach and elevate and

save this rapidly increasing class of children, have been repeatedly spread before the Legislature and the people of the State, and especially in the annual report of this department for 1850. In the appendix to that document, an account will be found of the broad and thoroughly beneficial results which have followed the kind of action contemplated in section 16 of this bill,—especially from the establishment of industrial schools in Aberdeen in Scotland.

The provisions in sections 19 and 20 to secure a uniformity and adequate and economical supply of books in all the schools of the same county, will get rid of one of the great hindrances to improvement in the schools. Touching, as it does, the pockets of the people, there is no lack of complaint from every quarter of the State of the evil of a perpetual change of text-books. With a few remarks on other topics I will bring this report to a close.

MAP OF CONNECTICUT.

I beg leave respectfully to urge on the attention of the General Assembly, the urgent necessity of a more full and correct map of the State, and the importance of supplying every school with a large map of each county, with all the boundaries of towns, school societies and districts, water courses, roads, factories, churches, school-houses, and other public buildings, plainly and correctly delineated. An enterprising and reliable publisher, Mr. Robert P. Smith of Philadelphia, has shown me a specimen of such a map, made from actual survey now in progress, for the State of Rhode Island, and is ready to enter upon the work and supply for our schools a similar map, both of the State, and of each county, on a large scale, on terms exceedingly moderate.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS.

Another year's observation and inquiry confirm the opinion I have before expressed, as to the origin, and influence of private or select schools. They grow, in most instances, out of the deplorable condition of the common schools—the small, dilapidated, uncomfortable and unhealthy school-house—the

neglect of all the appliances to secure modesty of behavior, and correct personal habits in children—the employment of unqualified teachers—the constant change of even good teachers, when such are employed for a season—the superficial attainments and limited course of instruction embraced in a majority of the district schools: for these and similar causes, those parents who know what a good education is, or feel the want of such an education in themselves, and are determined to provide it for their children at any expense, withdraw their children from the district school, and set up or patronize existing private schools. This is the origin of nine-tenths of the small primary schools, and even of many of the academies of the State, and in the mean time, the public school, deprived of the children and influence of those families, and left to them who are content with things as they were forty years ago, or who believe that a munificent school fund will educate children without the aid of good school-houses, teachers who are teachers, and the supervision which every other department of business receives—languishes, or at least remains stationary. I have no hesitation in saying that the extent to which private schools of different grades are now patronized by wealthy and educated families, is at once the most satisfactory proof of the low condition of the public schools, and the most formidable hindrance to their rapid and permanent improvement. It draws off the means and the parental and public interest which are requisite to make good public schools, and converts them, in some places avowedly, into schools for the poor, as though in a state which justly boasts of its equal privileges, there was one kind of education, or one class of schools, for the rich and another for the poor.

It classifies society at the root, by assorting children according to the wealth, education, or outward circumstances of their parents, into different schools; and educates children of the same neighborhood differently and unequally. These differences of culture, as to manners, morals, and intellectual tastes and habits, begun in childhood, and strengthened by differences in occupation, which are determined mainly by

early education, open a real chasm between members of the same society, broad and deep, which equal laws, and political theories cannot close. True it is that many persons who were doomed to an inferior and imperfect school education, make up for these disadvantages in after life by force of native talent and self-training; and many others who enjoyed the highest privileges of moral and intellectual improvement at school, are ruined by the false notions of superiority engendered and fostered by private schools.

It is my firm conviction, that the common school system of Connecticut can be made not only to occupy the place it once did in the regards of all men, and become the main reliance of all classes of the community for the elementary education of children—but that the schools established under that system can be made so good, within the range of studies which it is desirable to embrace in them, that wealth cannot purchase better advantages in private schools, and at the same time be so cheap as to be within reach of the poorest child. It will be a bright day for the state, and a pledge of our future progress and harmony as a people, when the children of the rich and poor are found more generally than they now are, side by side in the same school, and on the same play-ground, without knowing or caring for any other distinction than such as industry, capacity, or virtue may make. I have no expectation of seeing this better state of things realized, until the support of the common schools is made to rest in part on the property of the whole community, and until the causes which now make private schools to some extent necessary, are removed. As long as the majority of a school society or town are content with a single school in each district, for children of every age, of both sexes, and in every variety of study, and as long as the majority of a district are content to pack away their children in such school-houses as may be found in more than two-thirds of all the districts of the state; to employ one teacher in summer and another in winter, and not the same teacher for two summers or two winters in succession; and to employ, for even the shortest period, teachers who have no experience, and no

special training for their delicate and difficult duties ; so long will it be the duty of such parents as know what a good education is, or have felt the want of it in themselves, and are able and willing to make sacrifices to secure it for their children, to provide or patronize private schools. But it is no excuse for such, because their own children are provided with attractive, commodious, and healthy school-houses, with well trained and experienced teachers, and good books, to go to the district school meeting to vote down every proposition to build a new school-house, or to repair a dilapidated, repulsive, unhealthy old one—to supply the same with fuel, and all proper appendages and accommodations—to employ a good teacher for a suitable period of the year—or to purchase a small library, by which the blessings and advantages of good books may be made available to the poor as well as the rich. The progress of school improvement, dependent as it is on so many influences and complex interests, is slow and difficult enough under the most favorable circumstances ; but when it is opposed, or even not aided, not only by those into whose souls the iron of avarice has entered, and by others, who, not having enjoyed or felt the want of superior advantages themselves, are satisfied that what was good enough for them forty years ago is good enough for their children now, but by those who have shown their opinion of the necessity of improvement by withdrawing their own children from the common schools, it is a hopeless, despairing work indeed.

HENRY BARNARD,

Superintendent of Common Schools.

HARTFORD, May 1, 1852.